

# RADIO

SUMMER 1975

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## HISTORIAN

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Reflections of the Radio Era



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# CARDS & LETTERS

Concerning the discussion of reel-to-reel vs. cassette recorders, I feel that some constructive criticism is in order. Your consideration of the battery/AC operated cassette recorder as an OTR tool surprised me. While many of us began our interest in Old Radio by listening to commercially recorded cassettes played on such devices, the reproductive fidelity of these devices is so poor that they do not merit consideration among novices hoping to exchange tapes at a future date. Dubbing on most is possible only via a small mike, yielding a fair copy from what may have been a very good source. Quality sound reproduction and respect for the desires of our fellow traders is the basis of our hobby, and the suggestion that a beginner consider the purchase of such a contrivance can only do a disservice to those collectors who take pride in supplying the best copies they possibly can.

A few thoughts regarding a quality cassette player/recorder directed toward those considering building a collection of OTR around it. Because the tonal quality of old radio programs is generally only fair, one need not worry about the comparative recording ability of quality cassette and reel-to-reel. Tape hiss does become a factor in cassette recording, however, especially after a few gen-

erations, particularly if inexpensive, low quality tape is used. Storage and listing can also be a problem. Conceding that adequate reproduction can be achieved with cassettes, the convenience of each format becomes the most important consideration. Each cassette recording is a time-consuming custom copy while the reel-to-reel enables the collector to custom record or dub an entire reel, at double speed if desired. Finally, the vast majority of OTR swappers use 7-inch reels and the cassette enthusiast will find his contacts severely limited. In short the versatility, quality and popularity of the open reel machine make it the logical choice of the Old Time Radio Collector.

Robert McKenna  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Ed. Mr. McKenna makes some very good points and in principle at least, we agree with him completely. No one should attempt to trade shows using inferior equipment which produces poor quality copies.

However, it should not be assumed that all portable cassette machines are in this category. Patch cords (instead of mikes) can be employed with these recorders. We have copied cassettes in this manner. Both the original and the duplicate were then played back on an expensive stereo machine with very little noticeable difference between them.

Playback capability of small machines is usually poor and Mr. McKenna is right. The use of mikes will result in poor quality.

Find the theme songs of the radio programs.

Arkansas Traveler	Manhattan Serenade	Someday I'll Find You
Clare De Lune	Neapolitan Nights	Tammany
Destiny Waltz	Poeme	Tell The Story
Eleanor	Poor Butterfly	This Is It
Estrellita	Rock-A-Bye Baby	Traumerei
Here's To Whiskey	Rose Of Tralee	Valse Triste
Love For Three Oranges	Salut D'Amour	You
Manhattan Merry Go Round	Smile Darn Ya Smile	When Irish Eyes Are Smiling

U C A L R A L A T I L L E R T S E S P A R Y K E D A B K I Y  
O O C I F G I I S T I Y R O T S E H T L L E T C A N D O U A  
Y M R E L I M S A Y N R A D E L I M S U V I R R E Y H S G Z  
L E E T L E X P I H L A H F I T D E S T I N Y L O V E R I X  
L B P A A L I D P U I G S K A G G M N T O S R S K J Y O F A  
I A U M O N E A P O L I T A N N I G H T S P L T R O Z C Y E  
W C S M D E C A M A S L Y U A T R O N A E L E H S P O K X W  
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H S N Y O E E S R N W E M L I E E S E E N E O N E D R Y E V  
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A I A P F P H U I A A R L E T H I S I S I T H R T Y O O R P  
Y H D E S T E M N E L N E L J O A E A M N T A K S R C H E E  
I T V Z R I S E D I U C A E D W P I D A A N H T E R S H T E  
L O I R H C V R E B O W O N R D P O E M E A O S R E I G T R  
L H U U Y J I E L L Y N V Y A E L N Y R S M U S E M H A U R  
F S C O H T A I M N A E D A N E R E S N A T T A H N A M B H  
I E N M T Y P A I S E U R S I A N J E A C G A N O A E R R O  
N L N A S K A T J E L A N O R E T A D N F E B P N T H T O T  
D G E D O I S U E L A I E E L A R T F O E S O R A T U L O F  
Y R L T L E A R W D D K E I S O A N M K O A H E T A I N P A  
O I E U D S C H C U A M R A O C L H A E N R N E D H S O N V  
U B E L W H E N I R I S H E Y E S A R E S M I L I N G C S O  
A H E A N N S A U L Z J A O N E E T S I R T E S L A V I W L  
R C L S G L E C D K A I N O N K A M A K I R Y O T M N O K A

# RADIO HISTORIAN

EDITOR	Thomas J. Wegner
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	John R. Heup
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	Edward J. Fintak
EDITORIAL SECRETARY	Yvonne J. Fintak
ARTWORK	Mary Beth Heup

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ON THE COVER: Red Skelton.....a master of satire, and a clown as well. While these represent both subtle and slapstick humor, Red is an expert at both. His characterizations are classics: Clem Kaddiddlehopper, Deadeye, San Fernando Red, and the Mean Widdle Kid. (Drawing by Mary Beth Heup)





## a word from our sponsor

One thing we have found out since the beginning of RADIO HISTORIAN is that OTR collectors are a great bunch. They are eager to help each other in providing shows and information for each other. But it should not stop there. True, commercial interest in OTR has gained considerably in the last few years. Many stations are finding audience response to re-broadcasting shows to be favorable. This is to some extent an offshoot of the current nostalgia "fad". There is no doubt that this will eventually pass. This is where the OTR buff can help considerably. Anyone who is really interested in the hobby can do much to bring it to the general public. One of the most obvious ways of accomplishing this is to contact radio stations that do broadcast OTR, expressing an interest in its continuation. Other non-OTR-buffs, friends and relatives can be encouraged to do the same.

There are other more direct ways that hobbyists can create an interest in OTR. We know of several people in the teaching profession who are using it for its educational capabilities. What better way is there for developing comprehension of the spoken word?

Other possibilities include taping an evening of assorted program material for use in Veterans Administration hospitals, or for that matter nursing homes, and particularly homes for the blind. The latter would seem to be an excellent choice since TV is out of the question. There is no better source of entertainment for those who are sightless than two or three hours of radio comedy, drama and music.

The whole point is; let's not confine our generosity to a select group. By helping others to benefit from OTR we will be helping ourselves.

*Tom Wegner*

## FRANK BRESEE..... old time radio "in person"

*One of our subscribers, Frank Bresee of California has been most helpful and generous in sharing his experience (and tapes) with us. If any of you have been fortunate enough to hear his show, you know how informative and interesting it is. We print the following article not only for its interest to all OTR collectors, but in the hopes that others of you will take a few minutes to send us articles that we can use in the pages of RADIO HISTORIAN.*

Frank Bresee, radio historian-writer-producer, specializes in memories. He owns one of the largest private collections of old radio programs.....dating back to the very first regularly scheduled program and including virtually every popular series and special ever presented.

He also has a vast collection of scripts, posters, premiums, books and films on the top stars of radio's golden era.

Thirty years in the business and still a young man, Bresee began as a child star. He was Red Ryder's kid sidekick, Little Beaver and played roles on Lux Theatre and many other shows.

In 1967, word of Bresee's collection led the American Forces Radio Network to recruit him as host of his own weekly program. "The Golden Days of Radio." Today it is one of the network's most popular shows, with an audience estimated at more than 250 million people in thirty countries.

In 1971, he brought the program to KMPC, in Los Angeles, where it quickly became a top-rated nightly feature.

The new found interest in oldtime radio prompted Bresee to syndicate his "Golden Days of Radio" in November of 1974. The program is now aired on more than fifty stations throughout the country.

Bresee has also produced "Golden Days of Radio" shows for inflight programming on Delta and Continental Airlines and he and his program have been a featured attraction on Sitmar Nostalgia Cruises to Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean.

He has written and produced twelve-hour, 50th anniversary specials for Los Angeles' KFI and Denver's KOA, and for the past three years has produced oldtime radio segments for the National Leukemia Radio-Thon, which is aired on stations throughout the country.

In February of 1975, Bre-



see entered into an agreement with Universal Studios for the establishment of the Frank Bresee Golden Days of Radio Museum at the world-famous studios. Now one of the top attractions of the Universal Tour..... the Museum features scripts, posters, premiums, books, props, and other radio memorabilia and a continuous film featuring the top stars and programs of the 1930's and '40's.

Radio's golden era can never be duplicated, never be replaced, but thanks to Frank Bresee, those beautiful, exciting and sometimes frightening days will never be lost.

...

## A SALUTE TO:

*Jay Hickerson of Orange, Ct.  
publisher of Hello Again.*

Our salute for this issue or RADIO HISTORIAN goes to a man who not only is a hard working booster of old time radio, but a man who rates near the top as a supplier of highly informative news and tips about what's happening in our hobby.

Jay Hickerson has been publishing "Hello Again" for some time now and always seems able to cram each page with articles, names of traders (old and new), call letters of radio sta-

tions that carry OTR, and many other valuable bits of information pertinent to OTR.

He's been an active collector for more than 5 years, amassing not only large libraries of Suspense, Escape, Dimension X and X-1 but one of the biggest and best arrays of Jack Benny shows, for whom his publication "Hello Again" is named.

His newsletter has evolved into a monthly paper which he began in June 1970 several months after he began gathering the tapes and discs that he now has in his collection.

Here, a word or two about Jay himself seems appropriate. He was kind enough to supply RADIO HISTORIAN with a little biographical background about both himself and his publication.

Jay is in his early forties and the father of three children, Jeff, Robin, and Craig, all of whom are musicians, just like their dad. He not only plays piano professionally, but also teaches the instrument in Orange, Connecticut.

Somehow he finds time to put together "Hello Again" on a monthly basis. With all of the information that is crammed into its pages, just putting it together seems that it could

be a full time job. Jay says that these days most of his collecting is confined to searching catalogs and other sources for some of the more rare shows.

The friends he has made through the pages of "Hello Again" are many including many people who were actors or actresses on OTR. He also has helped organize "Golden Age of Radio" conventions in New Haven and tells us that more are coming up.

In his own words, Hello Again's purpose is to exchange ideas about collecting and trading and to tell you all about you all". That purpose is fulfilled admirably and we not only salute Jay Hickerson and wish him well but pay our tribute to "Hello Again" and hope it keeps coming for a long time, to come.

...

## RH IS FOR YOU

Since our main concern at RADIO HISTORIAN is the transmitting of names, ideas, and information about our hobby as well as encouraging correspondence between our subscribers we would again like to appeal to all of you to drop us a line telling about your particular wants, likes and dislikes. Let us and our other subscribers know what types of shows you

trade; if you trade at all. We are happy to put your name and address in our swappers column so that other traders know where your interests lie. We realize that most of you are already trading with others, but perhaps you have reached the point when you have obtained all you need or want from your regular sources and are looking for some new catalogs. Probably you can find others to trade with in our ads, but we depend on each of you to provide us with the information so we can print it and put you in touch with traders with similar interests.

And when you tell us of your particular interests tell us a little about yourselves and tell us about the people you trade with.

We also like to include in each RADIO HISTORIAN articles written by our subscribers. We have had one story for each issue and would love to hear from more of you along these lines.

Basically, what we're trying to say is that RADIO HISTORIAN is for and about you and our hobby and the more information we can get from you, the easier it will be to put out a first class publication directed to you. So please keep in touch.

....

# BASIC TAPE EDITING

*Cleaning up and correcting taped radio shows can be a tricky and often difficult task. It takes time, patience, and practice but can be very rewarding.*

You've been trading shows for a number of years now. Your collection totals out to several thousand hours of material. You've heard them all and it is becoming more and more difficult to locate traders who have shows that are not in your collection. If you are a typical collector, quite a few items in your collection probably contain flaws of one type or another. While some of these are the result of electronic problems of incorrect control settings when recording, others simply come about from poor timing. The recorder is started a few seconds too late or is turned off a little too soon at the end of the show. The same is true for commercial breaks. Often a collector will attempt to edit a show that is being broadcast currently. He makes a noble attempt to remove unwanted, present day commercials. They are usually accompanied by modern popular rock music anyway, hardly in keeping with the program material. Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to anticipate the exact point at which the pause button should be depressed and when it should be released. The result is often some

missing syllables or the first bar or two of a commercial for an upcoming local rock concert is included. (The reader will please note at this time that our references to rock music are not intended to imply any particular like or dislike for it. Modern day music, or for that matter modern day products simply have no place on OTR).

Re-broadcasts of old radio shows are an excellent source of material, but unfortunately they often contain unwanted segments. We will consider some of the ways to edit them. Actually the same ideas apply to any kind of dubbing, regardless of the source. This brings us to the first and probably only hard, fast rule. NEVER ATTEMPT TO EDIT ANYTHING ON THE FIRST PASS. If you are recording from a radio, or for that matter, another tape, use a tape that you know is longer than the actual duration of the show. Start recording several minutes before the actual start of the show and include all material in its entirety until well after the show is over. This tape can now be used as the source for transferring on to another tape and doing any neces-

sary or desired editing in the process. Thus any editing errors can be corrected. Indeed, the whole job could be done over again if necessary, since the original is not lost in the process.

Once we have the entire show on the "master" tape we can get down to the business of editing. This is where split-second timing and plenty of practice comes in. There are three basic ways of removing unwanted material: (1) Physically cutting and splicing the tape itself, (2) electronically erasing unwanted portions, and (3) Not recording unwanted portions in the first place through a judicious and well-timed use of the pause button.

It is a combination of the last two methods that will be covered in this article. Incidentally, while editing of sorts can be done on a machine that is not equipped with a pause button, by using the stop and record buttons, this will produce unsatisfactory results. More about this later. Another extremely helpful tool is a stop watch.

You can pick one up at a department store or one of the electronics houses for about twenty bucks. It's well worth the investment. A lot of guess work will be eliminated by using it at the right places. A machine that has monitoring capabilities can also be helpful but this is not absolutely necessary as long

as you can hear the material as it is being fed into the slave unit. Proper use of monitoring devices is a subject that will be covered in future issues.

Getting back to our editing job, let's make a trial run to make sure all recording level controls and bass/treble settings are OK. Merely record a minute or two of program material and then play it back. Once you have everything as you want it rewind the tape and forget about the setting. No changes are to be made to these levels once you start dubbing and editing. Now we'll start over with both tapes. Start the slave unit, putting it in the RECORD mode. Run the tape in for as long as you want for leader time. I like to provide at least thirty seconds. Actually it is a good practice to splice in leader material to protect the tape and this may or may not be part of the thirty seconds.

This is up to the individual. When the tape has reached the point where you want the show to start, stop the tape by pressing the PAUSE button. DO NOT USE THE STOP BUTTON as this will de-energize the head and will be noticeable on the tape as an audible click. Now, with the slave unit in what might be called a "holding pattern" play the master tape up to the point where the show actually starts. Listen carefully to the words, phrases, musical notes or



whatever else can serve as a cue. If necessary play the segment several times until you are positive as to the precise spot you want to start recording. Stop the machine at this point and back the tape up a few turns manually or with a short spurt with the rewind lever. Now start playing the tape while your hand is on the pause button of the slave unit. At the precise point you have determined to be the start of the show, release the pause button. Now you're rolling; no unwanted material, no "pops" or clicks on the tape.

Now we come to the next step, which is removing that unrelated commercial. Unless you know in advance precisely when the commercial starts, and can again press the pause button on the slave unit at exactly the right time, you will run over. Part of the commercial will be on your copy. This is really no problem at all. In fact, if this happens, it is a good idea to continue running the commercial for another ten or fifteen seconds and then simply turn the machines off. By letting the commercial run on a bit instead of attempting to cut a split second late, you eliminate the possibility of a "click" on the tape at the point where you want to cut. You see, at this point you must back up a little bit on the slave and this may de-energize the head.

Now, the master is played to the end of the commercial to the point where you want to start recording again. Stop it here. The copy on the slave unit is now rewound and played back. If you are using a high quality cassette recorder (not one of the portable battery types) as the slave you have an advantage over some open reel types. At precisely the point where the show stops and the commercial starts, stop the machine using the pause button. While this button is depressed, press STOP and then START/RECORD. Thus you have changed from the playback mode to the record mode without moving the tape. The procedure is a little more complicated if your open reel machine employs the same lever for forward, reverse and pause. Nevertheless, it can be done. All you need are three hands (or a competent helper). Actually you can do it yourself as follows: Exactly where the commercial starts, turn the lever to stop. Manually back the tape up slightly. It should be backed-up just slightly more than the actual distance between the erase head and the playback head. With your left thumb pointing downward and holding the RECORD buttons down, try to reach up with the fingers so as to hold the reel in place without turning. While doing this, quickly turn the starting lever to PAUSE. The tape is now in the correct position to erase and

record at precisely the right spot. If you desire a short period of silence in place of the commercial, release the pause button for the appropriate length of time, and then depress it again. Now back up the master tape a few turns as you did at the beginning of the show, and start to play it. At the precise point that the commercial ends, release the pause button on the slave and you're off and running again. The entire procedure is repeated until the end of the show. However, at the end, when you are cutting the superfluous material, there is one final step. After you have "spotted" the precise end of the show, the tape is stopped by using the pause button. As described previously, the machine is changed from a playback mode to the record/play mode while the pause button is depressed. This button is released to start the tape. While the tape is moving the volume controls on the slave are turned to full off position. Now the machine can be turned off without putting a pop or click on the tape.

Fortunately, it is much easier to actually go through the procedure just described than it is to read about it. With a little practice you can become very proficient. After a while you will find yourself using reflex actions rather than planned step-by-step motions. By the way, both machines should be placed

within easy, comfortable reach. It might also be more efficient to employ the machine on the left as the master with the one on the right as the slave. This seems logical since most things move from left to right. (Reading, signs, even the tape on your recorders). However this is up to the individual. The point is, once you have established a routine, stick with it. Changes will only serve to confuse things.

You could find yourself erasing a tape that you really intended to copy.

As you can see, the pause button is a very important feature on a tape recorder. Proper use of it will make your editing jobs much cleaner and easier. There are many other interesting things that can be done with tapes such as splicing different segments together to make a complete show or even changing the context by inserting or deleting certain words and phrases. Nevertheless, it's all based on the basic procedure we have just covered.

As an aid to following through in editing your tapes, we have included on page 14 and 15, a chart showing a step-by-step procedure to follow in the basic editing of a show.

*Editor's Note: Perhaps some of our readers have their own favorite methods of editing. We'd appreciate hearing from them so we can pass the ideas and information along.*

■ ■ ■

## STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURE FOR BASIC TAPE EDITING

### "MASTER" RECORDER

- 3 Install master tape on this recorder. Locate start of show and re-wind tape several revolutions.
- 4 Start playing master tape.
- 6 Continue playing well into first commercial and stop machine.
- 8 Locate precise point where show resumes after commercial and stop machine here.
- 13 Rewind tape several revolutions and resume playing.

(Repeat all of the preceding steps as often as necessary for all deletions to be made.)

AT END OF SHOW STEPS 12, 13, and 14 SHOULD BE DISREGARDED AND STEP 15 SUBSTITUTED.

### "SLAVE" RECORDER

- 1 Make tape copy from original source such as radio, phono, or other tapes. Include all program material including commercials and a few minutes before and after the show.
- 2 Install blank tape and put machine in START/RECORD mode. Run tape in for the desired lead time and stop by using PAUSE button.
- 5 At exact start of show, release the PAUSE button.
- 7 Stop machine.
- 9 Rewind for a short time and play back to precise point prior to start of commercial. Stop machine using PAUSE button.
- 10 With PAUSE button depressed, press STOP button.
- 11 With PAUSE button still depressed, push RECORD/PLAY buttons. (Or employ the "3 hand" method).
- 12 (Optional) Release PAUSE button for the desired amount of silence between show segments. Depress PAUSE button.
- 14 At exact point where show resumes, release PAUSE button.
- 15 Release PAUSE button and turn RECORDING LEVEL CONTROLS to full off position. Turn off machine.



# Radio Bands

"Evenin' folks, How y'all".....For the hundreds of thousands of radio fans of Kay Kyser, 'The Ol Professor', this was the signal that told them that "Kay Kyser's College of Musical Knowledge" was about to begin its weekly session on the air.

His orchestra and "all the gang" included Ginny Sims, Harry Babbitt, Ish Kabibble, and Sally Mason. For almost three decades, the Kyser organization was at the top of the popularity ratings. The band excelled in virtually every aspect of show business; in theatres, ballrooms, nightclubs, movies, radio and television. Their recordings are still being played.

Organized in 1926 at the University of North Carolina it soon began to play the top spots in the country and was especially popular in the midwest. On the band's first date, Kay Kyser froze. Johnny Mercer, Kay's good friend, fronted the band. After that, he developed into one of the top leaders and radio personalities.

Kay Kyser's band was classified in a group of successful bandleaders described as creating distinctive but not distinguished music. These men were respected more for their commercial rather than artistic creativity. Because they

used musical tricks and gimmicks, Kyser's band was one of the mickey - mouse bands. It must be pointed out that those tricks and gimmicks required precise musicianship.

One of the musical tricks used was the "singing song title". Sammy Kaye picked it up after a while also. A few years later, Kyser was accused of copying Kaye's use of the practice. Bitterly, Kyser remarked that Blue Barron (Harry Friedland) was doing it too and that "if he's a success, he owes me ten per cent". Kay Kyser was known to be an outspoken man. The singing song title saved time on radio that would have been wasted by the spoken announcement.

Another innovation was for added identification. The band would play a few bars of the theme song (Thinking of You) as Kyser announced the vocalist's name just before his or her chorus.

When leading the band, Kyser could be the picture of dignity or a buffoon. Off the bandstand, he was

known as a practical but shrewd business man leading a normal life of clean habits and simple tastes. He picked his personnel carefully and there were few changes over the years. He was quoted as saying; "You might make a musician out of a gentleman, but you can't always make a gentleman out of a musician".

In 1934, Kay Kyser followed Hal Kemp's band at Chicago's Blackhawk Restaurant. Within months they broke Kemp's all time attendance record there. It was at the Blackhawk that Kyser started to play musical games with the patrons. If they could guess the titles, they would receive prizes. This continued on radio from the restaurant and the "College of Musical Knowledge" was born. Listeners were eager to write in with questions because Kay would read the name of the person who sent in the question over the air. In 1938, the show was presented on NBC for the American Tobacco Company.

In addition to the novelty, tunes, Kyser's group provided some good glee club work. It was noted that Kyser admired Fred Waring and Kyser's glee club was a pretty good imitation of Waring's.

By the early forties, Harry Babbitt and Ginny Sims were vocalists with the band. Ginny at one time shared vocal duties with

a clarinetist named Woody Herman for Tommy Gerun's band. She was Virginia Simms then. There were at times, rumors of a romance between Kay Kyser and Ginny Sims. Nothing came of it and in September, 1941 Ginny left to star on the Kleenex radio show.

Other vocalists with the band included: trumpeter Merwyn Bogue (Ish Kabibble), saxophonist Sully Mason, Michael (Mike) Douglas (later to become a TV personality), Trudy Erwin, Gloria Wood, and Lucvann Polk.

Of the seven movies he made with the band, several (1939 - That's Right, You're Wrong, 1940 - You'll Find Out, 1941 - Playmates), remind us of remarks he was famous for on radio or songs his band popularized. His other movies were: 1942 - My Favorite Spy, 1943 - Around The World, 1944 - Swing Fever, and 1944 - Carolina Blues.

About September, 1942, one of the band's most popular records was "Praise The Lord And Pass The Ammunition". The phrase is attributed to Chaplain Howell M. Forgy stationed aboard a cruiser, who said it to a string of men during the raid on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941. Frank Loesser the composer, sang the song over the phone to Kyser

then to his arranger. In typical Kyser manner (no procrastinating) the band recorded the song the next day.

Continued on page 27

# Spinning the dial

RADIO HISTORIAN has decided to start a new feature in each issue; a column in which we'll relay to you many of the interesting stories or anecdotes about which other OTR buffs have written. As stated frequently, we're always glad to hear from our subscribers because we know that you give us a wealth of things to write about and pass on to the rest. This new column "Spinning the Dial" will be the place.

Vard Miller, a new subscriber, stationed with the Navy Recruiting Command in Phoenix, Arizona tells us that his tapes of OTR have been useful in the recruiting program. He contacts low power AM stations in the area and has them run Navy ads in exchange for his duplicates of old shows.

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Dan Marafino of Lancaster, NY (near Buffalo) writes to us that he is currently the president of the "Old-time Radio Club of Buffalo". The club is made up of 14 members who collect and trade radio, TV, big bands, speeches, etc. They meet monthly at various locations in the Buffalo area and have contacted stations in their vicinity trying to get their shows on the

air. Clubs of this type are exactly what we want to encourage. So if any of you in or near Buffalo are interested in joining the club contact Dan Marafino, 19 Church St., Lancaster, NY 14086.

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While on a recent vacation to the Southeast and East your editor had occasion to chat with a couple of you in cities along my route. I tried to contact some others but got a couple no answers. I enjoyed the conversations I did manage to hit on and will continue to try to get in touch with others on my vacation routes.

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Also while on vacation I visited with Mr. Les Waffan of the United States National Archives who on behalf of the archives, had requested a subscription to RADIO HISTORIAN. Needless to say, we were greatly pleased and highly flattered that our publication should be included in our National Archives. Of course we realize that there are many, many other periodicals included, but its still an excellent feeling to know that RADIO HISTORIAN is there. We have also recently received a request from the Public Archives of Canada for a subscription.

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A nostalgia convention called "Rivercon" will be

held in Louisville on July 25, 26, and 27 at the Stouffer's Inn. Our source tells us that it will be slanted towards Sci-Fi and fantasy with a smattering of OTR, and possibly comic books and movies.

Marvin Meyerhoffer, 2525 Hermitage Way, Louisville, KY 40222 is trying to form an OTR club for fans in the area. Anyone interested can get in touch with him at (502) 426-3010. Maybe next year's Rivercon can have more of a radio touch.

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The Golden Radio Buffs of Maryland recently held their fourth annual banquet at which they presented the National Golden Mike Award to Sybil Trent star of many radio shows including "Let's Pretend", Stella Dallas, David Harum, and others too numerous to mention. From the program we received the affair looked great and we look forward a year hence, when the fifth banquet is to be presented. A number of other awards were given to some local radio celebrities.

The Golden Radio Buffs of Maryland, organized in 1972 with just 6 charter members has grown to a current membership of 157 mostly in the Baltimore area. They meet 4 times a year and publish a quarterly newsletter. Anyone interested in obtaining more information may contact Owens Pomeroy, 3613 Chestnut Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21211 or

Gene Latner, 3127 Wallford Drive, Apt. D, Baltimore, MD 21222.

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## Deaths of Famous Radio Personalities

Dick "Two-Ton" Baker, on May 4, at the age of 59. For many years he had a 15 minute radio show that was packed with non-stop humor, vocals and piano playing. Although he was the only performer on the show he never showed any signs of the pressure that could exist during such a performance. He made it all look easy and relaxed. Two-Ton's piano work always displayed skillful musicianship, too.

Baker also cut a few records, the most popular being "Civilization" (Bongo, Bongo, Bongo, I Don't Want To Leave The Congo!). He used Chicago as home base and his cabaret style entertainment was well known.

Cass Daley at the age of 59. Famous comedienne of radio and movies. Had many guest appearances and supporting roles on radio with such names as Bob Burns, Bing Crosby and Frank Morgan. At one point the Fitch Bandwagon show featured Miss Daley.

Dunninger (Joseph) on March 9, at the age of 82. Magician and mentalist enter-

Continued on page 27



# RADIO through the years

PART THREE.....Never, since the days of the traveling medicine show, has there been a media that combined entertainment and salesmanship as successfully as radio has with BROADCASTING and SPONSORED SHOWS.

The term "broadcast" is generally attributed to Dr. Frank Conrad, assistant chief engineer for Westinghouse and director of KDKA in Pittsburgh. His talks were made to anyone listening rather than to one specific receiving station.

The early years of broadcasting were harsh years for many radio stations. Those that were not associated with large successful companies, such as KDKA put in business by Westinghouse, could hardly afford to maintain the equipment, supplies and power to stay in business. There had to be a remedy! One alternative was to follow the British and nationalize all radio broadcasting stations. Another alternative was commercial advertising. Still another was a radio tax.

The question persisted; how to support radio stations and continue broadcasting. By 1932, the question will have been answered and radio will have matured. The growth of broadcasting from 1920 to 1932 was marked by a proliferation of stations, patent infringement suits, crowding of the airwaves, government licensing and control, advertising, condemnation of

advertising, and finally acceptance of advertising and sponsored shows.

In 1916, when David Sarnoff was working for the American Marconi Company in New York, he wrote: "I have in mind a plan of development which would make radio a household utility. The idea is to bring music into the home by wireless. The receiver can be designed in the form of a simple 'radio music box'..."

Prophetic words....

During the Great War, the government banned radio activity except for national emergency. In 1919, activity resumed. 1920 saw KDKA the first licensed station. By 1921, there were only a few more around the country. More than 500 stations were licensed by 1922 and the airwaves became crowded with some stations overpowering smaller ones. Among the stations licensed in 1923 were:

- 72 Universities
- 69 Newspapers
- 29 Department Stores
- 12 Religious Groups
- Several Municipalities,
- Automobile Dealers,
- Theatres, and
- Banks

Not all stations were of the "Radio City" image:

October 5, 1926.....Vida, Montana...Population..25. KG CX was launched by the First State Bank of Vida. Broadcasting was done by Ed Krebsbach when he "could slip away from the front counter."

A decade and a half after Sarnoff's prediction, the prophecy will have been fulfilled. Radio had matured all right. But; besides outright, unabashed advertising; maturity in 1932 meant much more. Many stations were curtailed, some were arbitrarily put off the air by the Department of Commerce (Herbert Hoover was instrumental in licensing many stations in the 1920's.) Shows were now rehearsed, scheduled and sponsored. Performers and announcers were popular and were now identified to the listeners. In 1925 announcers were identifying themselves with call letters and the station owners were annoyed that a personality's popularity would steal attention from the station and its owners.

Early broadcasts consisted of talks, church services and music. Later came special events such as election returns and sports. The aim was to encourage sales of receiver sets. During the early years of the 1920's, program length was determined only by how long it took to present the material. Vincent Lopez's debut on WJZ in Newark was a last minute replacement for a cancelled show. They had no script

and the announcer, feeling that something should be said to introduce the program and not knowing what to say himself, told Vincent Lopez to say something. His words "Hello everybody.....Lopez speaking" would be his greeting on radio and in ballrooms from then on. They played for an hour and a half.

Stations started to compete for talent. Once this began to happen, the era of free talent was over and station costs really began to spiral.

In some areas, several stations were clustered around the same point on the dial. Not all listeners objected. The fascinating problem of disentangling them many times became the evening's occupation. Men would boast to their fellow workers how they met the challenge and overcame it.

With the crowded conditions of the airwaves and no government control in the early days, stations agreed to observe "Silent Night". Stations agreed not to broadcast for a specified period. For some this was several hours nightly and others it might be one whole day every week.

Because many stations operated during daytime hours and with the observance of

Silent Night, late night-time broadcasts were more audible. Late night performers became the new idols to listening audiences. The Coon - Sanders Kansas City Nighthawks Orchestra gained popularity for this reason. Orchestra music wasn't always able to be played over radio for technical reasons. In the very early years, with the signals fading occasionally, Hawaiian music was best suited for radio because of the sound of the steel guitar.

Now all this entertainment had to be paid for. While broadcasters would proclaim their purpose in broadcasting was for the public good and advertising had no place in radio, the dollar would win over noble sounding public interest claims.

It was a subtle approach at first. A talk would be presented on a particular industry. The speaker would dwell on his company's activities in that industry. Care was taken not to mention specific products, color of can, size, store locations, or price. As broadcasters became bolder, advertisers told their story thru the name of the program; The Lucky Strike Orchestra, A & P Gypsies, and Billy Jones and Ernie Hare were the Happiness Boys for the Happiness Candy Company. By 1930, "no direct advertising on radio" meant the sponsor would

tell everything to the listener but would not mention price.

The Eveready Hour was an example of what was to come; the show was sponsored, rehearsed, and the announcements were written in advance. In 1932, Fred Allen had an audition program prepared--cast assembled--rehearsals started. He said "Now I had a radio program, all I needed was a sponsor". The Linit Show resulted.

By 1931, virtually every advertising agency had a radio department. Neither the station, network, nor the sponsor had to concern itself with building the show. While this was not always the case, agencies preparing shows for clients prospered handsomely.

Commercial announcements were designed to grab the listeners attention, hold it while the pitch was made, and cause the listener to remember the product until he gets to the store to make the purchase. The best time length seemed to be one minute long. Red

Skelton once said: "The longest word in the English language is the one that follows". And now a word from our sponsor. The best way to present the commercial was anyone's guess. With the drama explosion on radio, came the dramatized commercial. Then there were the humorous ones, singing commercials

(Jones & Hare for Interwoven Sox is thought to be the first singing commercial), and just plain announcements.

Kellogg's Cereals and Ovaltine often were advertised with premiums offered for boxtops. Response was tremendous and showed that radio indeed was a good advertising media and that premiums stimulated sales. Many advertisers later would use the same technique to sell their product.

It would be impossible to separate broadcasting and commercial sponsorship. They complimented each other. Today there are 401,000,000 radio sets and 7,000 licensed stations in the U.S. The listener pays nothing for the entertainment and news, and can always turn the radio off if he doesn't want to listen to the sales pitch of the advertiser. Radio has come a long way since advertising was frowned upon as a means to support it. But advertising was and still is the life's blood of broadcasting.

Next issue.....The Radio Salespitch.

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North American Radio Archives, P. O. Box 13114 Station E, Oakland, CA 94661 seeks help in preparing their publication. Those interested contact NARA.

## ON THE MARKET

There are a number of books dealing with old time radio available today. They all make very interesting reading, by covering anecdotes, and general information on shows, actors, personalities, etc. However, one of the finest we have seen is The Big Broadcast by Frank Buxton and Bill Owen. While it has been on the market for several years it is definitely worthy of mention at this time because the most recent edition is a greatly expanded version. Possibly your nearest bookstore has it in stock or can order it for you. Our copy was purchased earlier this year and was on the dealer's shelf.

The Big Broadcast is a must for all serious collectors because it is a comprehensive reference work providing all details of most radio shows on the air between 1920 and 1950. While many interesting bits of information are included, the basic format is that of an alphabetized encyclopedia listing all characters, the actors playing the parts at one time or another, theme songs and sponsors. At the bottom of each page is a notation showing the first and last show covered on those particular pages so locating a specific program is as simple and fast as looking



up a number in a telephone directory. Even though The Big Broadcast is a reference book, it is likely that many collectors will find themselves reading it from cover to cover. It's that interesting!

Just in case your bookseller has to order it for you, The Big Broadcast is published by The Viking Press Inc. 625 Madison Ave. New York, N.Y. 10022. It sells for \$12.95 and is well worth the price.

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## ON THE AIR

RADIO HISTORIAN MAGAZINE would like its readers to submit information for this column regarding stations in their areas that are currently broadcasting old time radio shows. We will be happy to list them. Please include city, station call letters, (along with Khz or Mhz numbers), day and time of broadcast. A brief description of the format and whether or not shows are uninterrupted, would be helpful along with any comments about cue-ins etc.

MILWAUKEE, WIS. Sun. 7:30 PM WUWM (FM 89.7) Selected shows each week, plus recorded jazz and swing music from the 30's and 40's. Presented by Jed Dolnick. Uninterrupted after show has started. Cue-in and cue-out excellent.

Chicago, Ill. Sundays 8:35 PM WGN (AM 720) Selected half hour show each week. Presented as part of the Floyd Brown Show. Uninterrupted after show has started. Cur-in and cue-out are acceptable.

Grand Rapids, Mich. WYON FM 1013 Tuesday and Thursday-7:30 PM, Good In-cues, Poor Out-cues. Interrupted with local commercials. Miscellaneous old shows.

We have been informed the following stations broadcast OTR. We suggest you check your local newspaper listing for details. We were not provided with information regarding dates and times of broadcast and commercial breaks.

New York WRUR-FM 106.7

Syracuse WSYR AM 570

Oswego NY WRVO-FM 89.9

Rochester NY WCMF-FM 96.5

Ithaca NY WHCU-FM 97.3

Kingston Ont Can CKLC-FM

Rome NY WKAL AM&FM 1450 95.9

Madison Wi. WTSO AM 1070

Syracuse NY WCNY-FM 91.3

Salt Lake CY KVER-FM 90.1

Bowling Green Oh. WBGU-FM

Valparaiso In. WAKE AM

Decatur, GA WOAK AM 1310

Drama, Mystery, Suspense, SI FI. Solomon E. Feldman 119 Pooler Ave. De Kalb IL 60115

Music of the 30's, and 40's. Rev. George Duffy 1315 E. 28th St. Brooklyn NY 11210

All aspects of old radio Richard Kaczmarek, 20-3rd St. Sayreville NJ 08872

Operatic stars on old radio Rudy Williams, 95-05 105 St Richmond Hill NY 11418

Daytime drama and soap operas, kids adventures, and game-quizz shows. Joe and Sue Crawford, 201 E. Chapman Ave. #31-J Placentia CA 92670, 1-714524-6888

Will buy or trade for any Rathbone-Holmes in VG+ condition. John Gatto, 235 W. 76th St. NY NY 10023

### SWAPPERS

William C. Schommer, 15425 Heather Hill Dr., Brookfield, WI 53005 O/R,C

Larry DeSalvatore, 25 Sachem St. New Britain CT. 06053 O/4

Jack Sanders, P. O. Box 6022 San Diego CA 92106

Tom Wegner, 4912 N. Idlewild, Whitefish Bay, Wis. 53217

Billy Strickland, 118 Coburn Dr. Chattanooga, TN 37415

## Next Question Please

Q. Is there a standard method of identifying shows that don't have a specific title?

Larry Spalding  
Tampa, Florida

A. There seems to be a lot of confusion in this area. Perhaps our readers might suggest a method of standardization.

Q. Can we get information about trading or somehow obtaining 78 RPM records or tapes thereof.

Several People

A. The staff of RADIO HISTORIAN is also interested in music of the past and we all have collections of some, but we decided at our inception that the magazine would be devoted entirely to OTR. So unless they pertain to remote broadcasts we won't be able to carry anything about records in our pages. (Ditto for movie sound tracks)

Q. Could you include the address of the California Radio OTR Club?

Sue Cook  
Box 7  
Beaumont, CA 92223

A. We assume you mean:

North American Radio Archives  
P. O. Box 13114 Station E  
Oakland, CA 94661



# BUY - SELL - TRADE

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING RATES

"SWAPPERS" COLUMN IS FREE OF CHARGE AS LONG AS NO SPECIFIC SHOW OR SERIES NAMES ARE USED. SEND INFORMATION AS YOU WANT IT PRINTED, INCLUDING METHOD USED FOR RECORDING, CATALOG AVAILABILITY, ETC.

"WANTED TO BUY", "WANTED TO SELL", "WANTED TO TRADE" ADS WHICH MENTION NAMES OF SHOWS OR SERIES WANTED BY SPECIFIC NAME ARE 10¢ A WORD. FULL NAME AND ADDRESS OF AD PLACER IS COUNTED AS 7 WORDS OR 70¢.

SAME RATE APPLIES TO MISC. ADS, INCLUDING "FOR SALE" ADS FOR SUPPLIES, LOGS, TAPE, SERVICES, OR OTHER EQUIPMENT.

## TRADERS ADS-SWAPPERS

When writing copy for any ad please use the following codes for method of recording

Open Reel 1/4 Track - 0/4  
Open Reel 1/2 Track - 0/2  
Cassette - C  
8 Track - 8

## WANTED TO BUY

Old time radio memorabilia books. Also shows before 1935. Jack Sanders P.O. Box 6022 San Diego CA 92106

Interested in buying or trading Let's Pretend, Quiz Kids, Information Please, Little Orphan Annie. Robert Reynolds, 106 S. 8th Street Brawley CA92227

## WANTED TO TRADE

Lux Theatre, Hallmark or Gulf Playhouse, Bickersons, My Friend Irma, My Favorite Husband, Henry Aldrich, Any Mystery or Suspense type series, Voice Of Firestone, Telephone Hour, Big Band Era music, moderate size collection for 'trades'. 0/4, 0/2, C. M. C. Emery, 8309 5th N. E., Seattle, WA 98115

News and documentaries (0/4) J. C. Bray, P. O. Box 98, Green Lane, PA 18054

Charlie McCarthy, Fred Allen Lum & Abner, Suspense, Stephen Alan Clark, Box 6660 Ponce PR 00731

Sherlock Holmes on cassette particularly Rathbone-Bruce David D. Decker P. O. Box 534 Bryn Mawr PA 19010

Mysteries such as Suspense Escape, 1800' 4 track 3-3/4 Ralph E. Miller, P. O. Box 92 Wayland, MA 01778

Would like to add to my collection of OTR shows but time limitations prevent custom swapping. Will give one brand new DAK 1800' tape in return for use of three tapes from your collection for copying. I pay all postage and provide \$10.00 security deposit prior to requesting tapes. Will return your tapes within a week. Or if you prefer to do the dubbing will swap 3 new reels for 2 recorded tapes. If interested please send list to John R. Heup 2345 N. 62 Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Radio Bands continued from page 17

During the war (WWII) the band played only at service camps and hospitals.

Several years later, the beautiful Georgia Carroll was singing with the band. She and Kay were married and their marriage turned out to be one of the most successful in show business.

The College of Musical Knowledge went to TV but by then Kyser was losing interest in the band business and turned to Christian Science teachings. Kay and Georgia returned to North Carolina.

Kay Kyser shunned the spotlight after his retirement. Reports were that he would refuse to be interviewed and told the press that the days of the band business were behind him and he didn't want to talk about it.

In 1974, Kyser moved to Boston to manage the film and broadcasting department of the Christian Science Church. Tom Waldman, who assists Kyser, was a writer for the television series Kyser did for The Ford Motor Company. Kyser was referred to Waldman for a treatment of a physical ailment. Waldman is a Christian Science physician.

During his career as a bandleader Kay Kyser was responsible for a lot of

entertainment: scores of popular recordings, a dozen vocalists, years in radio and television. Dance music, novelties, vocals: all done first class, by a first class gentleman.

■ ■ ■

Check your library.....

A possible source of old radio shows might be your local public library. We have found that the main library in some cities have old shows on cassettes or on record. In the Milwaukee area we couldn't find any OTR at the main branch but there are some suburbs with their own libraries and not a bad collection of material. Its all on cassette and can be checked out exactly the same way as a book. Generally of good quality they can be dubbed easily. So stop at your library or call them. They may have some shows you can add to your catalog.

■ ■ ■

Dunninger continued from page 19

tained audiences for sixty years on stage, radio, and later television. He had been ill for several years. Dunninger was a long-time associate of Harry Houdini and had an uncanny ability to create the illusion of reading minds. He often said that he was only doing what any six year old could do with sixty years of practice. A wife and two daughters survive.